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MONTANA LABOR MARKET

Monthly Review of
EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK, LABOR SUPPLY, LABOR DEMAND, CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

MONTANA STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE Division of Unemployment Compensation Commission of Montana

Albert F. Root, Commissioner

Chadwick H. Smith, Chairman

Paul R. McClure, Commissioner

Mitchell Building — P. O. Box 1728 — Helena, Montana

FL. 194.



APRIL, 1959

March Employment Level 2,600 Above a Year Ago

The back-to-work movement began in March for the first of the seasonal workers idle since last fall and winter in Montana's non-agricultural industries. Estimates developed by the Commission in cooperation with the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics showed an increase of 900 in employed workers in March over February, and a rise of 2,600 in employment totals over the comparable period last year. The upward trend gained the most momentum in contract construction, and the trade and service industries. An estimated 151,800 workers were on payrolls of industries and commerce as of March 15, compared to 149,200 a year ago.

Construction Heads Hiring Line

Contract construction led the March hiring with 400 workers added to the industry's payrolls during the month. Current employment in this field is estimated at 8,200 with an employment advance of 1,300 over the comparable period last year. Future prospects look very good as a variety of construction projects, both highway and building, are off to an early start. Employment increases are bound to show at both air bases in Great Falls and Glasgow with new construction projects planned at these facilities. In the Glasgow area housing is scarce and living costs are rising.

Noxon Dam Near Completion

Approximately 300 workers are still active on the Noxon Rapids Dam project in northwestern Montana as the 85 million dollar project receives the finishing touches. Impounding of water has begun, backing up a

LABOR SURPLUS DOWN BY 8% DURING MARCH — STILL 6,700 ABOVE AVERAGE

Montana's labor surplus was reduced by 8% from February to March, a lower than average showing for this time of the year, and still leaving 20,000 applicants seeking work through local employment service offices. The current count of unemployed, although down 3,200 from last March, is 6,700 above the average March unemployment total of 13,300 for the past nine years. Although the job situation showed good improvement in March and economic trends continue to point upward, the problem of a higher than usual labor surplus for this time of the year remains. The improved employment level this year, as compared with last, was not matched by a corresponding decrease in unemployment. Job opportunities are not keeping pace with increases in the size of the available labor force expanding with new entrants. Labor surpluses during the coming summer months are almost certain to continue to exist in greater volume than previous years as college and high school students register for summer work, and immigration of transient workers adds to the job seekers files.

reservoir 38 miles long. The first of four 100,000 kilowatt generating units is expected to go on the power line by September 1. When project construction was at its peak, 2,000 workers were employed.

Lumber Totals Temporarily Lower

Plagued by soft access roads and fixed load limits, a usual spring occurrence, lumber employment fell 100 below last month's level but was still 600 above last year. Within the next few weeks, employment advances are expected to be more than just seasonal with expanded work forces both in the woods and at the mills. Development of the lumber industry has been of significant proportions especially in the Polson area the past few years with the building of new mills and expansion and improvement of existing establishments to meet the continued growth of demand for lumber and wood products.

Open Pits and Automation

According to the 1958 preliminary annual report of the U. S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Mines, Montana copper production in 1958 declined less than 1 per cent from 1957. During 1958 more than 3,000 less workers were employed in the metal mining industry than in 1957, yet copper production nearly equaled that of 1957 and smelter employment was at normal levels. Graphic evidence of the effect of open pit mining and automation on the Butte scene cannot easily be denied. Thousands of Butte miners automated out of employment can only wonder what condition will bring them back to employment. No one seems to know the answer. The entire labor market picture in the area could be further clouded later this summer when negotiations for a new contract between the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers and the Anaconda Company are scheduled to begin.

LABOR TURNOVER RATES IN MANUFACTURING AND MINING INDUSTRIES (per 100 employees)

INDUSTRY	ACCESSION RATE						SEPARATION RATE								
	Total			New Hire			Total			Quit			Layoff		
	1) Feb. 1959	2) Jan. 1959	Feb. 1958	Feb. 1959	Jan. 1959	Feb. 1958	Feb. 1959	Jan. 1959	Feb. 1958	Feb. 1959	Jan. 1959	Feb. 1958	Feb. 1959	Jan. 1959	Feb. 1958
†All Manufacturing.....	2.3	2.7	1.4	1.9	1.5	0.5	3.0	2.7	3.5	1.2	1.1	0.5	1.2	1.1	2.6
Durable Goods.....	3.0	3.3	1.6	2.6	1.6	0.4	3.6	3.3	4.8	1.2	0.9	0.6	1.5	1.5	3.8
Primary Metal.....	1.2	2.2	0.7	0.4	0.1	0.1	2.5	1.7	1.6	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.3
Nondurable Goods.....	1.0	1.6	1.2	0.8	1.3	0.7	2.0	1.9	1.3	1.2	1.3	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.7
All Mining.....	2.6	6.4	0.8	0.9	1.8	0.2	3.3	4.0	7.2	1.8	2.1	0.7	0.9	1.1	5.7
Metal Mining.....	2.6	5.2	1.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	3.2	4.2	5.2	2.2	2.8	1.0	0.2	0.6	3.1

1) Preliminary rates based on all data available at publication time.

2) Figures previously released revised on more complete returns.

†Excludes sugar and canning industries. *Total separations include discharges and miscellaneous separations.

Along the Hiring Line— Field Summary, Apr. 1

ANACONDA, Deer Lodge, Philipsburg—(391 jobseekers, 76 new; 258 men, 133 women). Smelter employment reliably stable with only replacement hiring. No large scale hiring seen in immediate future. Construction work forces expanding as weather moderates. New housing starts evident with release of 60 building lots in new housing addition. No immediate labor shortage expected.

BILLINGS, Columbus, Hardin, Hysham, Laurel, Red Lodge, Roundup—(2,952 jobseekers, 551 new; 2,238 men, 714 women). Building construction expected to be highest in many years. New projects include multi-million dollar shopping plaza, 25 unit motel, churches, and residential units, bowling alley, high school and grade schools, and roller rink. Remodeling of downtown building will occupy many craftsmen. Approximately 3,000 building tradesmen will be employed. Work resumed on bridge and highway construction, idle since last fall. Railroad hiring slow, but extra gangs for track maintenance and repair to be called in April.

BOZEMAN, Ennis, Three Forks, Trident—(843 jobseekers, 222 new; 683 men, 160 women). Building program at Montana State College in good progress; sufficient labor available. Projected residential construction during summer months may result in shortage of carpenters. Ten miles of highway under construction, along with two new bridges. Logging operations slowed by spring breakup, but only temporarily. New building projects include bank building, school, and bowling alley.

BUTTE, Virginia City, Whitehall—(2,081 jobseekers, 257 new; 1,522 men; 559 women). Metal mining employment totals maintained at last month's level. Open pit zinc mining operations still suspended due to right-of-way dispute; approximately 80 workers idle. Increased activity noted in sales and service industries with approach of summer buying season. Railroad employment up with addition of track crews for summer track repair and maintenance.

CUT BANK—(520 jobseekers, 41 new; 383 men, 137 women). Labor market picture improved with increased activity in oil exploration and drilling, opening of construction, and spring hiring in trade and service industries. Thirty-five employed in Glacier Park in preparation for summer season. Four road jobs slated for start during April.

DILLON—(253 jobseekers, 78 new; 170 men, 83 women). Work on area construction projects resumed with warmer weather, including college dormitory, super market and national guard armory. Oiling of four miles of city streets to start as weather permits. Highway construction expected to re-

LABOR MARKET INDICATORS

Employment—	Mar. 1959	Feb. 1959	Mar. 1958	Mar. Avg. 1950-58
Industrial Employment	151,800	150,900	149,200	146,800
New Job Applicants	3,297	3,855	3,328	2,926
Job Applicants, End of Month	20,045	21,802	23,394	13,340
Insured Unemployment, Week of	Apr. 3 1959	Mar. 6 1959	Apr. 4 1958	Avg. 1st Apr. Wk. 1955-59
New and Renewal Claims	812	1,363	898	838
Unemployed Weeks Filed	12,196	15,144	16,133	10,411
Total Unemployment Claims	13,008	16,477	17,031	11,249

sume April 15. Recall of Forest Service personnel for summer employment slated early in April.

GLASGOW, Fort Peck, Malta, Opheim—(836 jobseekers, 113 new; 698 men, 138 women). Construction at Glasgow air base expected to exceed previous years. Most major contractors engaged in preliminary work prior to opening of season. Heavy equipment operators, crusher operators, and engineering personnel chiefly employed at present. Start of base housing project expected during April with recall of carpenters. Currently, 300 workers employed on base project, 100 over last month. Housing in area limited and living costs rising.

GLENDALE, Circle, Wibaux—(227 jobseekers, 67 new; 185 men, 42 women). Construction slow in starting, but future activity promising. Oil drilling stable, but not in volume of last year. Railroad employment totals reduced by last year's shutdown of roundhouse and related shops. Trade and service industries normal with increased activity expected during summer months.

GREAT FALLS, Choteau, Fort Benton, Stanford—(2,314 jobseekers, 394 new; 1,550 men, 764 women). Most major industries reported improvement over prior month. Callbacks in contract construction point to higher activity over last year, and peak employment by midsummer. Trade and service industries show good progress with some shortage of qualified service workers. Brisk increase in agricultural orders with major activity in livestock operations. Start of field work during April will see heavy demand for experienced tractor operators.

HAMILTON, Stevensville—(528 jobseekers, 34 new; 424 men, 104 women). Logging operations hampered by spring breakup and soft roads with temporary layoff of half or more of area logging forces. Retail trade improving with service industries expected to provide increased employment as weather moderates. Labor market picture optimistic for summer months with two projected irrigation dam projects and new mill at mining site.

HAVRE, Chinook, Harlem—(515 jobseekers, 91 new; 395 men, 120 women). Hiring activity in most industrial groups increased

during the month. Outlook in non-agricultural employment is promising with construction the dominant factor. Residential and commercial construction expected to occupy all qualified craftsmen. Railroad employment less than last year due to completion of most track repair work.

HELENA, Boulder, Garrison Townsend, White Sulphur Springs—(1,065 jobseekers, 167 new; 832 men, 233 women). Encouraging gains over last year in most major industries led by contract construction and retail trade. Few new construction projects in evidence, but work renewed on projects started last year. Record building year predicted in residential construction. Shortage of qualified workers in clerical and sales classifications continues.

KALISPELL, Columbia Falls, Eureka, Libby, Whitefish—(2,471 jobseekers, 308 new; 1,975 men, 496 women). Logging operations temporarily stalled in Kalispell and Libby areas due to spring breakup. Some mills closed due to lack of logs. Future prospect, however, remain good. No heavy construction projects planned next 30 days. Trade and service industries normal for this time of year.

LEWISTOWN, Harlowton, Ryegate, Winnett—(284 jobseekers, 46 new; 214 men, 70 women). Callback of construction workers main factor in reducing jobless totals. Accelerated hiring in trade industries as business volume increased. Calving and lambing main agricultural activity; demand for other farm help expected to increase within two weeks.

LIVINGSTON, Big Timber—477 jobseekers, 84 new; 316 men, 161 women). Stable employment in lumber industry despite some adverse conditions attributed to spring breakup. One mill closed due to log shortage but majority have stockpiles to continue operation. One mill on double shift. Building and highway construction increasing and prospects of private home building good. Railroad employment steady with some extra gangs to be recalled soon. National Park Service workers being recalled prior to park opening.

MILES CITY, Baker, Ekalaka, Broadus, Jordan, Terry—(457 jobseekers, 154 new;

NINE YEARS OF MONTANA INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT TOTALS, BY MONTHS (in Thousands)

	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Aver.
1951	141.9	139.4	140.3	145.9	149.4	151.1	153.5	154.6	154.3	152.4	151.7	150.6	149.0
1952	140.5	140.7	143.0	149.7	154.8	159.9	159.5	161.2	160.4	157.9	156.0	154.9	153.2
1953	145.8	141.5	146.3	149.7	153.1	158.0	158.5	160.6	160.3	159.6	157.6	156.4	154.2
1954	146.7	145.5	147.2	151.1	155.7	161.6	164.1	167.4	154.8	153.9	158.2	155.7	155.0
1955	148.4	146.8	147.4	153.4	158.4	166.8	168.2	170.4	169.8	165.9	162.4	160.3	159.8
1956	154.3	152.1	154.2	160.7	167.0	175.0	175.7	177.5	176.9	173.6	167.9	165.2	166.7
1957	159.0	157.8	158.6	163.0	168.6	174.8	176.9	176.8	175.2	170.0	165.4	161.1	167.3
1958	151.9	149.0	149.2	153.6	159.0	164.5	165.0	167.0	165.0	162.0	160.0	157.8	158.7
1959	152.2	150.9	151.8*										

*Preliminary estimate.

Along the Hiring Line— Field Summary, Apr. 1

(Continued from page Two)

355 men, 102 women). Worker applicant files in skilled classifications including operating engineers, tractor operators, and mechanics being reduced as workers leaving for major project areas. Oil field work increasing with indications of greater demand in the future. Trade and service industries making good recovery after holiday season.

MISSOULA, Drummond, Arlee, Superior—(1,462 jobseekers, 271 new; 1,029 men, 433 women). Muddy roads and load limits hampering area lumber activity; currently 40 men idle. Stockpile of logs at mill allows normal production and no layoffs anticipated. Construction activity nearing point of increase. Expansion of highway construction in area doubtful.

POLSON—(492 jobseekers, 79 new; 406 men, 86 women). Worker applicant files increasing due to in-migrants expecting work in new sawmills. Total employment in Lake County lumber industry approximately 600, with more expansion predicted. Plywood mill closed for one week due to log shortage caused by soft roads and load limits. Residential and building construction slated for increase during April.

SHELBY—(435 jobseekers, 86 new; 335 men, 100 women). Construction contractors recalling crews for building and highway construction. Gravel stockpiling at highway interchange site began and preliminary work started by dirt and fill contractor. Local hiring limited as contractors arrived with key personnel. Start of summer season found increased hiring in service industries, especially motels and cafes. Good gains in trade industries due to early Easter and good weather.

SIDNEY—(360 jobseekers, 56 new; 325 men, 35 women). Present construction contracts limited to grain elevator at Fairview and additional rip-rapping of Missouri River near Nohle. Home construction expected to be on par with 1958. Shortage of finish carpenters at present and expected to increase. Oil field activity confined chiefly to reworking of producing wells.

THOMPSON FALLS, Hot Springs—(507 jobseekers, 62 new; 435 men, 72 women). Noxon Rapids Dam project employment at 300 during the month. Contract for completion of interior of power house let with work slated for later this summer. Sawmill production erratic as some workers replaced by automation, some temporarily idled as repair work and installation of new machinery caused closures. Sufficient logs stockpiled to carry mills through the spring breakup period. Limited work crews on Hot Springs highway project, but expansion expected shortly.

WOLF POINT, Plentywood, Scobey—(575 jobseekers, 60 new; 477 men, 98 women). Start of seasonal hiring in construction, agriculture, and trade helped reduce job seeker files. Largest decline occurred in skilled workers group as carpenters recalled to local projects and work at Glasgow air base. A variety of small building and civic improvement projects scheduled for start at end of April, absorbing most skilled crafts men. Trade and service industries expected to show gradual gains next 30 days. Employment in oil fields relatively stable with only seasonal hiring by oil well service firms.

ESTIMATED EMPLOYMENT IN NON-AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES IN MONTANA (1)

(Compiled in co-operation with United States Bureau of Labor Statistics)

INDUSTRY	EMPLOYMENT			Net Change	
	Mar. 1959 (2)	Feb. 1959 (3)	Mar. 1958	Feb. '59 to Mar. '59	Feb. '58 to Mar. '59
NON-AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES	151,800	150,900	149,200	900	2,600
Manufacturing	18,300	18,300	18,400	00	—100
Durable goods	11,100	11,100	10,900	00	200
Lumber and timber products	5,900	6,000	5,300	—100	600
Primary metals	4,000	3,900	4,400	100	—400
Other (4)	1,200	1,200	1,200	00	00
Nondurable goods	7,200	7,200	7,500	00	—300
Food and kindred products	3,500	3,500	3,700	00	—200
Printing and publishing	1,700	1,700	1,600	00	100
Petroleum refining	1,000	900	1,100	100	—100
Other (5)	1,000	1,100	1,100	—100	—100
Mining	9,300	9,300	8,200	00	1,100
Metal mining	6,000	6,000	5,000	00	1,000
Coal, quarrying and nonmetallic	700	700	700	00	00
Petroleum-natural gas production	2,600	2,600	2,500	00	100
Contract Construction	8,200	7,800	6,900	400	1,300
Contractors, building construction	2,500	2,100	2,100	400	400
Contractors, other than building	2,300	2,300	2,000	00	300
Contractors, special trade	3,400	3,400	2,800	00	600
Transportation and utilities	18,600	18,700	19,000	—100	—400
Interstate railroads	9,000	9,100	9,400	—100	—400
Transportation except railroads	4,000	3,900	3,500	100	500
Utilities including communication	5,600	5,700	6,100	—100	—500
Trade	36,100	35,800	36,600	300	—500
Wholesale trade	7,800	7,700	7,900	100	—100
Retail trade	28,300	28,100	28,700	200	—400
General merchandise and apparel	5,700	5,500	5,300	200	400
Food stores	4,400	4,500	4,400	—100	00
Eating and drinking establishments	6,600	6,500	6,600	100	00
Automotive and filling stations	5,800	5,900	6,100	—100	—300
Retail trade not elsewhere classified	5,800	5,700	6,300	100	—500
Finance, insurance and real estate	5,800	5,800	5,700	00	100
Services and miscellaneous	19,800	19,600	20,200	200	—400
Hotels, rooming houses, camps, etc.	2,200	2,100	2,400	100	—200
Personal services	2,200	2,200	2,100	00	100
Other (6)	15,400	15,300	15,700	100	—300
Government	35,700	35,600	34,200	100	1,500
Federal	8,300	8,200	8,200	100	100
State and local	27,400	27,400	26,000	00	1,400
Great Falls Area (Cascade County)	18,200	18,000	17,900	200	300
Manufacturing	2,900	2,900	2,800	00	100
Contract construction	1,300	1,200	1,200	100	100
Transportation and utilities	2,100	2,100	2,200	00	—100
Trade, wholesale and retail	5,100	5,000	5,100	100	00
Services and miscellaneous (7)	3,900	3,900	3,900	00	00
Government	2,900	2,900	2,700	00	200

- (1) Estimates include all full and part-time wage and salary workers who worked or received pay during the pay period ending nearest the 15th of the month. Proprietors, firm members, personnel of the armed forces, domestic servants, and self-employed persons are excluded.
- (2) Preliminary estimates based on return from samples of 648 selected Montana establishments.
- (3) Figures previously released have been revised on return from 1,036 such establishments.
- (4) Includes fabricated metal products, machinery except electrical, furniture, stone and clay products.
- (5) Includes apparel, chemicals, and miscellaneous manufacturing products.
- (6) Includes commercial trade schools, auto repair services and garages, miscellaneous repair services and hand trades, motion pictures, amusements and recreation, medical and health, law offices and professional services, non-profit membership organizations and businesses not otherwise classified.
- (7) Same as (6) above, also includes finance, real estate and mining.

COMPARISON OF BASIC LABOR MARKET ACTIVITIES IN MARCH, 1959 AND MARCH, 1958

Employment Service Office	New Job Applicants				Jobseekers in File				Job Placements								U. I. Claims Wk. 4-3	
	Mar. 1959		Mar. 1958		Mar. 1959		Mar. 1958		Mar. 1959				Mar. 1958				1959	1958
	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Ind.	Ag.	Tot.	Vet.	Ind.	Ag.	Tot.	Vet.		
Anaconda	76	16	93	31	391	95	488	178	15	19	34	15	14	11	25	6	280	333
Billings	551	148	462	143	2,952	783	2,702	907	379	94	473	189	228	76	304	136	1,436	1,983
Bozeman	222	77	148	49	843	285	969	293	129	34	163	57	81	19	100	31	370	373
Butte	257	75	451	169	2,081	635	2,539	927	81	12	93	38	40	13	53	20	1,038	1,905
Cut Bank	41	16	72	26	520	181	620	269	38	111	149	20	25	82	107	48	306	400
Dillon	78	28	101	36	253	65	337	125	22	82	104	51	24	73	97	56	170	222
Glasgow	113	35	90	29	836	299	695	253	105	66	171	59	66	101	167	94	558	519
Glendive	67	17	124	31	227	76	321	141	55	27	82	34	52	25	77	44	160	229
Great Falls	394	110	37	95	2,314	639	2,735	948	285	110	395	143	153	69	222	76	1,247	1,969
Hamilton	34	6	38	12	528	161	656	202	23	14	37	15	20	20	40	12	371	408
Havre	91	25	84	26	515	162	718	292	109	76	185	54	46	93	139	46	396	637
Helena	167	41	226	103	1,065	408	1,375	537	81	12	93	23	59	23	82	35	696	738
Kalispell	308	97	183	49	2,471	759	3,084	1,142	88	14	102	31	83	10	93	39	2,013	2,444
Lewistown	46	5	71	25	284	85	402	145	41	35	76	32	15	24	39	17	201	327
Livingston	84	18	86	26	477	112	625	212	41	13	54	22	24	10	34	20	388	479
Miles City	154	49	105	35	457	143	538	207	85	46	131	46	35	32	67	29	401	424
Missoula	271	60	327	125	1,462	454	1,909	691	78	17	95	29	70	18	88	43	1,135	1,509
Polson	79	26	44	14	492	169	690	256	41	53	94	42	15	19	34	12	471	549
Shelby	86	22	72	19	435	139	537	191	56	324	380	25	20	377	397	10	244	409
Sidney	56	21	61	15	360	100	400	125	33	18	51	19	10	12	22	7	310	288
Thomp. Falls	62	22	43	19	507	168	561	205	55	2	57	23	77	3	80	29	402	497
Wolf Point	60	14	77	24	575	181	493	186	28	5	33	8	11	10	21	8	415	389
TOTALS	3,297	926	3,328	1,101	20,045	6,099	23,394	8,432	1,868	1,184	3,052	975	1,168	1,120	2,288	818	13,008	17,031

*Include 554 claims of the Federal Employees UC Program, 581 same a year ago.

AVERAGE HOURS AND EARNINGS IN SELECTED MONTANA INDUSTRIES

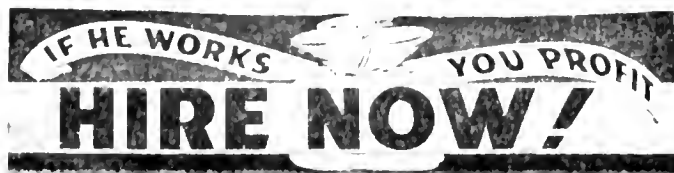
(Produced in co-operation with United States Bureau of Labor Statistics)
(Hours and earnings data exclude administrative and salaried personnel)

INDUSTRY	Average Weekly Earnings			Average Weekly Hours			Average Hourly Earnings		
	Mar. (1) 1959	Feb. (2) 1959	Mar. 1958	Mar. (1) 1959	Feb. (2) 1959	Mar. 1958	Mar. (1) 1959	Feb. (2) 1959	Mar. 1958
All Manufacturing	\$95.51	\$95.34	\$86.25	40.3	40.4	37.5	\$2.37	\$2.36	\$2.30
Durable goods	93.73	93.90	83.85	40.4	40.3	37.6	2.32	2.33	2.23
Primary metals	93.46	94.09	90.06	39.6	39.7	39.5	2.36	2.37	2.28
Nondurable goods	98.49	98.49	89.25	40.2	40.7	37.5	2.45	2.42	2.38
Food and kindred products	91.16	91.29	74.88	43.0	44.1	38.4	2.12	2.07	1.95
All Mining	99.20	99.29	99.06	40.0	40.2	40.6	2.48	2.47	2.44
Metal mining	95.16	95.16	92.58	39.0	39.0	38.9	2.44	2.44	2.38
Transportation and Utilities (except railrds.)	95.42	96.23	94.11						
Transportation (except railroads)	110.02	112.11	115.20						
Utilities and communication	84.46	84.24	80.73	39.1	39.0	39.0	2.16	2.16	2.07

(1) Preliminary estimates. (2) Figures previously released have been revised on more complete returns.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION
COMMISSION OF MONTANAMITCHELL BUILDING
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